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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 1384

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: JULY 18 EVENING SESSION

REF: A. SAIGON 1337
B. SAIGON 1340

1. EVENING JULY 18 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REJECTED PRESIDENTIAL SLATES OF NGUYEN DINH LUYEN, DUONG VAN MINH AND LU QUANG HONG, AND APPROVED NGUYEN VAN THIEU-NGUYEN CAO KY TICKET. SPECIAL COMMITTEE MADE NO RECOMMENDATIONS ON ANY OF THESE

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FOUR CASES, ALTHOUGH, AS WAS BROUGHT OUT IN MORNING SESSION, IT HAD VOTED TO ACCEPT MINH CANDIDACY AND REJECT OTHER THREE.

2. FIRST CASE TO BE CONSIDERED WAS THAT OF NGUYEN DINH LUYEN-TRAN VAN THOAN. PROTEST WAS FILED AGAINST THOAN FOR HAVING HELD FRENCH CITIZENSHIP FROM 1938 TO 1955. RAPPORTEUR NGUYEN HUU CHUNG REPORTED THAT CHARGE AGAINST THOAN WAS CONFIRMED BY MINISTRY OF JUSTICE. FOR THAT REASON, CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL RECOMMENDED THAT LUYEN-THOAN CANDIDACY NOT BE APPROVED. IN DEBATE WHICH FOLLOWED GIAP VAN THAP AND BUI VAN KIEU SUPPORTED THOAN. THAP ASSERTED THAT THOAN HELD VIETNAMESE CITIZENSHIP AT BIRTH, WHICH IS ALL ELECTION LAW REQUIRES. FACT THAT HE TEMPORARILY RELINQUISHED IT SHOULD NOT DISQUALIFY HIM. ASSEMBLY WAS AMUSED BUT NOT CONVINCED BY THAP'S ARGUMENT. KIEU CALLED FOR SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING FOR THOAN, NOTING THAT HIS TEMPORARY FRENCH CITIZENSHIP DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE IS NOT A GOOD NATIONALIST. SEVERAL DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE DEPUTIES, INCLUDING HUYNH VAN LAU, TRUONG TIEN DAT AND VAN KINH, CALLED FOR STRICT APPLICATION OF LAW, WHICH IN

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THEIR VIEW CLEARLY DISQUALIFIED THOAN. BY A VOTE OF 53 IN FAVOR (OF APPROXIMATELY 70 DEPUTIES PRESENT) ASSEMBLY VOTED TO REJCT LUYEN-THOAN SLATE, THUS SETTING IMPORTANT PRECEDENT FOR CASE THAT FOLLOWED.

3. ASSEMBLY THEN TOOK UP SITUATION OF DUONG VAN MINH AND TRAN NGUOC LIENG. NGUYEN HUU CHUNG READ ENTIRE DOCUMENTATION OF BOTH MINH AND LIENG CASES: LETTER OF GENERAL CAO VAN VIEN AND CORPS COMMANDERS BARRING MINH'S RETURN FOR REASONS OF NATIONAL SECURITY; CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL MESSAGE RECOMMENDING THAT ASSEMBLY REQUEST ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MINH CASE BEFORE MAKING DECISION; STATEMENT OF MRS. MINH BEFORE SPECIAL COMMITTEE IN WHICH SHE BLASTED COMMITTEE FOR REQUESTING MINH TO APPEAR WHEN COMMITTEE KNEW FULL WELL HE COULD NOT COME HOME, AND IN WHICH SHE DEFENDED HER HUSBAND AS A PATRIOTIC GENERAL WHOSE RETURN WOULD NOT ENDANGER NATIONAL SECURITY; PROTEST AGAINST LIENG FOR HAVING HELD FRENCH CITIZENSHIP; DECREE DATED FEBRUARY 24, 1950, SIGNED BY FRENCH PREMIER GEORES BIDAULT ACCORDING LIENG "METROPOLITAN STATUS"; CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION THAT LIENG

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NOT BE ALLOWED TO RUN; AND LIENG STATEMENT THAT HE HAD NEVER REQUESTED FRENCH CITIZENSHIP, AND HAD NEVER DONE ANYTHING TO SUPPORT CONCLUSIONS THAT HE HAD BEEN FRENCH CITIZEN.

4. ASSEMBLY DID NOT DISCUSS PROTEST AGAINST MINH, CONCENTRATING ONLY ON LIENG CASE. DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE DEPUTIES AGAIN TOOK LEAD, ARGUING THAT CASES OF LIENG AND THOAN WERE IDENTICAL, BOTH WERE FRENCH CITIZENS AND BOTH SHOULD BE ELIMINATED. HUYNH THANH DUC ARGUED THAT LIENG AND THOAN SITUATIONS WERE DIFFERENT, SINCE LIENG WAS MADE A FRENCH CITIZEN INVOLUNTARILY. DINH TRANH CHAU AGREED THAT LIENG CASE SHOULD NOT BE COMPARED TO THAT OF THOAN, BUT CONCLUDED THAT FROM LEGAL STANDPOINT LIENG MUST BE REJECTED. TRAN VAN PHIEN ARGUED THAT LIENG HAD EFFECTIVELY DENIED HAVING HELD FRENCH CITIZENSHIP AND URGED ASSEMBLY APPROVAL OF MINH-LIENG TICKET. SPECIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NGUYEN THANH VIEN EMPHASIZED THAT DECISION MUST BE TAKEN ON BASIS OF FACTS, NOT ACCORDING TO WHETHER LIENG DID OR DID NOT WANT TO BECOME FRENCH CITIZEN. ASSEMBLY DECIDED BY VOTE OF 54 IN FAVOR TO REJECT MINH-LIENG SLATE ON GROUNDS

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THAT LIENG ONCE HELD FRENCH CITIZENSHIP. DEPUTIES VOTING IN FAVOR OF REJECTION INCLUDE VIRTUALLY ALL DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE (30-35 DEPUTIES), SOME MEMBERS OF GREATER PEOPLES BLOC AND MRS, AND SELECTED INDEPENDENTS.

5. THIRD CASE TO BE CONSIDERED WAS LUU QUANG HONG-NGUYEN MANH HAI TICKET. HONG WAS PROTESTED FOR HAVING RAPED A GIRL, AND FOR ONCE HAVING EMBEZZLED $50,000. CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL MADE NO RECOMMENDATION WITH REGARD TO EITHER OF CHARGES AGAINST HONG, BUT DID CALL ATTENTION TO DISCREPANCY IN HONG'S DOSSIER. HE REPORTEDLY LISTED HIS YEAR OF BIRTH AS 1906, WHEREAS BIRTH CERTIFICATE SAYS 1905. AFTER BRIEF AND PERFUNCTORY DEBATE ASSEMBLY VOTED 61 IN FAVOR TO REJECT HONG-HAI SLATE.

6. EIGHTEENTH AND FINAL CANDIDACY TO BE CONSIDERED WAS THAT OF THIEU-KY. DESPITE LATE HOUR (APPROACHING MID-NIGHT) LARGE GALLERY CROWD STAYED ON TO VIEW ASSEMBLY DELIBERATIONS. AMONG MORE PROMINENT SPECTATORS DURING DEBATE ON THIEU-KY TICKET WAS NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR

NGUYEN NGOC LOAN, WHO HAD ALSO BEEN PRESENT FOR DEBATE ON CASE OF "BIG" MINH.

7. RAPPORTEUR CHUNG READ PROTESTS FILED BY AU TRUONG THANH AND HOANG CO BINH CHARGING THAT THIEU AND KY SHOULD RESIGN THEIR POSITIONS AS CHAIRMAN OF DIRECTORATE AND CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, SINCE THEY ARE IN EFFECT CIVIL SERVANTS. CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL RULED THAT THIEU AND KY ARE NOT CIVIL SERVANTS, HOLDING THAT THEIR POSITIONS ARE "ENTIRELY POLITICAL IN CHARACTER."

8. MRS DEPUTY NGUYEN VAN SANG WAS FIRST TO TAKE FLOOR IN DEBATE WHICH FOLLOWED. SANG SAID THAT HE HAD NEVER HEARD OF A "POLITICAL POSITION," AND THAT IN HIS OPINION THIEU AND KY ARE CIVIL SERVANTS AND SUBJECT TO PROVISIONS OF ELECTORAL LAW REQUIRING CIVIL SERVANTS TO RESIGN OR TAKE LEAVE WITHOUT PAY. HE PROPOSED THAT ASSEMBLY REJECT THEIR CANDIDACY, BUT THEN QUALIFIED HIS STATEMENT BY ADDING THAT ASSEMBLY SHOULD ENCOURAGE THIEU AND KY TO RESIGN BEFORE CAMPAIGN BEGINS IN ORDER TO DEMOSTRATE THEIR GOOD WILL.
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NOTE: PASSED S/S-O AT 12:05 PM 7/19/67
PASSED WHITE HOUSE, CIA, DOD, NSA, USIA AT 12:35 PM 7/19/67

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AID 9. DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE DEPUTIES SPOKE UNANIMOUSLY IN SUPPORT OF THESIS THAT THIEU AND KY ARE NOT CIVIL SERVANTS AND NEED NOT RESIGN OR TAKE LEAVE. DAM VAN QUY SAID THAT SPECIAL COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF THIEU-KY TICKET AND VOTE TO DISQUALIFY THEM WAS IMPROPER, SINCE COMMITTEE HAD NOT FULL STUDIED DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE. ACCORDING NON-DA BLOC SOURCES VOTED AGAINST THIEU-KY SLATE IN COMMITTEE. HE REJECTED NOTION THAT THIEU AND KY ARE CIVIL SERVANTS. THANH SUNG, NGUYEN VAN VI, HUYNH VAN LAU AND NGUYEN BA LUONG JOINED QUY IN SUPPORT OF THIEU-KY.

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10. NGUYEN VAN NGAI ARGUED THAT THIEU AND KY DO HOLD BASICALLY CIVIL SERVANT POSITIONS. HE ADDED THAT IN COUNTRIES WHERE CHIEF OF STATE AND HEAD OF GOVERNMENT ARE ELECTED THERE IS OF COURSE NO NEED FOR THEM TO RESIGN BEFORE CAMPAIGNING FOR RE-ELECTION. BUT THIEU AND KY WERE NOT ELECTED. NGAI ASSERTED THAT THIEU AND KY ARE RELUCTANT TO RESIGN BECAUSE THEY WANT TO MAINTAIN STRONG POSITION FOR COMING ELECTION. HE CONCLUDED THAT IF THIEU AND KY WANT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY DO NOT INTEND TO TAKE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE IN ELECTION, THEY SHOULD RESIGN. LY QUY CHUNG SECONDED NGAI, ARGUING THAT CONSTITUTION PROLONGED TERM OF OFFICE OF DIRECTORATE AS AN INSTITUTION, NOT OF THIEU OR KY. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THEY SHOULD RESIGN IN ORDER PREVENT UNFAIR ADVANTAGE IN ELECTION. NGUYEN DAT DAN WAS LAST TO SPEAK. HE AGREED THAT THIEU AND KY ARE CIVIL SERVANTS AND MUST TAKE LEAVE WITHOUT PAY.

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11. PRESIDING OFFICER NGUYEN HUU THONG ELOSED OFF DEBATE AT THAT POINT (APPROXIMATELY 12:30 AM) AND CALLED FOR VOTE.

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AS IN PREVIOUS THREE CASES THONG ASKED THAT ASSEMBLY VOTE ON RECOMMENDATION OF CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL RATHER THAN ON THAT OF NA SPECIAL COMMITTEE. THUS, IN FIRST THREE INSTANCES ASSEMBLY IN EFFECT VOTED ON MOTION TO REJECT CANDIDACIES, WHILE IN CASE OF THIEU AND KY IT VOTED ON MOTION TO APPROVE. ASSEMBLY VOTED 56 IN FAVOR TO ACCEPT THIEU-KY TICKET. DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE WAS SOLIDLY IN SUPPORT OF MOTION. OPPOSITION CAME FROM MRS AND SOME GREATER PEOPLES BLOC AND INDEPENDENT DEPUTIES.

12. COMMENT:

A. IN DEBATE ON THIEU-KY SLATE IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT OPPOSITION DEPUTIES (NGAI, CHUNG, ET AL.) DID NOT CALL FOR OUTRIGHT REJECTION OF THIEU AND KY. THEY EMPHASIZED THAT THIEU AND KY WERE OBLIGATED TO RESIGN, BUT DID NOT ADVOCATE DISQUALIFICATION ON GROUNDS THAT THEY HAVE NOT YET DONE SO.

B. ANOTHER POINT OF INTEREST IS COMPLETE SILENCE OF ASSEMBLY ON SUBJECT OF GENERAL MINH. AR' GENERAL OFFICERS COMPLAINT AGAINST MINH WAS NEVER MENTIONED IN DEBATE.

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C. PRESENCE OF GENERAL LOAN DURING DEBATE ON THIEU-KY SLATE MUST HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS TO ALL DEPUTIES. LOAN'S BEHAVIOR, HOWEVER, WAS NOT OUT OF ORDER (EVEN THOUGH HE WAS ONLY BEER-DRINKING SPECTATOR IN GALLERY). BUNKER
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